

*Mr. Smith With Mrs Osborn
kind respects.*

SERMONIC SKETCHES.

PART I.

BEING THE SUBSTANCE

OF

A COURSE OF LECTURES,

ON THE

BEATITUDES;

DELIVERED AT

The Dissenter's Meeting, Angel-Street, Worcester.

TOGETHER WITH SUITABLE

HYMNS,

ADAPTED TO THE CLOSET OR FAMILY;

AND

PUBLISHED BY DESIRE.

BY THE REV. GEORGE OSBORN.

Refrain not to speak, when there is occasion to do good....ECCLUS.

Teaching and admonishing one another....PAUL

Worcester,

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ADVERTISEMENT.

I HAVE frequently been solicited to publish a Volume of Sermons : it seems to me, however, that some short, yet full, Sketches of Discourses, publicly delivered, might be more acceptable to serious persons, as helps both for private and domestic worship, especially with suitable Hymns annexed, and at a moderate price. I offer this, therefore, as a specimen to my friends; and particularly to those who mourn with me the bereavement of near and dear relations. If encouraged, I propose, with Divine help, to begin and go through all the Beatitudes, the Moral Law, and the admirable Prayer of our Saviour. May the Master of our Assemblies bless his own Word; and may the Spirit of God revive and fix its impression upon all our hearts !

G. O.

Worcester,
11th September, 1797.



SERMONIC SKETCHES.

NUMBER III.

MOURNERS COMFORTED.

MATTHEW V. 4.

*Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall
be comforted.*

JUSTLY is our divine Saviour termed, 'the consolation of Israel;' the friend of helpless sinners, and the Physician of dying souls. He came not to assume worldly pomp or greatness himself; nor to recommend or promise such lying vanities to his disciples. He came to enlighten the blind, to loose the captive, to quicken the dead, and to heal the broken hearted.—For these gracious purposes the spirit of Jehovah was most eminently upon him: see *Isaiah* 61, 2.—*Luke* 4, 18. The law of kindness was upon his lips; and all his work, and doctrine, and life, and death breathe good-will to man.—But we must remember, the benefits which Christ imparts

are *appropriate*, and suitable to the state of his people; for the unspeakable blessedness of divine consolation, can only be received and enjoyed by real Mourners: *i. e.* by those who to lowliness of mind unite contrition of heart, and who lament their sin and misery with godly sorrow. These persons, however dejected and despised, are precious in the sight of God: to such he looks with peculiar regard, and with them will he dwell, by the mighty influence of his grace and Spirit, to revive and comfort and bless them. “*For thus saith the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth Eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.—Isaiah 57, 15.*”

I. LET us therefore endeavour reverently to understand the character of those who mourn. They are not disappointed worldlings; nor affected penitents; nor hypocritical devotees; nor frightened malefactors, trembling at expected Judgment. No, but *spiritual mourners*, who are broken down under conviction of sin, disgusted with the deceitful vanities of life, and seriously concerned to obtain lasting consolation. It may

assist our meditations to arrange the several ideas descriptive of religious mourners.

1. They deeply feel and lament the *burden of Guilt*. Divine light has broke in upon their understanding, and strong conviction impressed their Judgment; so that they know they are sinners, and as such condemned, exposed, and helpless. They see the opposition of their carnal mind to a holy, just, and good Lord; they mark the purity and excellence of that moral law, against which they have so often and so highly offended; and they bitterly bewail their estrangement from the God of their lives, and their exposure to his wrath. Being thus "pricked to the heart," and viewing the terrors of the Almighty armed against them, they make no vain excuses, they seek no dangerous palliatives: but renouncing themselves and the world, with broken spirits, and with streaming eyes, they fall down before the throne of Grace, each crying "Guilty, guilty; Unclean, unclean: God be merciful to me a sinner!" Such was David as described, *Psalms* 51st: and the Prodigal, *Luke* 15, 18.

2. They are also oppressed with a body of Corruption; not merely burdened with Guilt, but *wearied of Sin*. They mourn for the total depravity of their whole nature; the blindness

of mind, hardness of heart, obstinacy of will, and perverseness of affection, which continually beset and distress them. Reflecting on childhood and youth, they are pained at past follies and vanities; and knowing the bitterness of transgression, they are grieved at the apprehension "of one day falling by the hand of their enemies." The impotence of their own best resolutions, and the strength of various temptations, and the malice of the great Adversary, fill their hearts with anxiety, and overwhelm them with distressing fears. "*Wretch that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of sin and death!*" This was St. Paul's condition, as expressed Rom. vii. 18, 24.

3. True spiritual Mourners dread the loss of divine Favour, and tremble at the thought of *final apostacy*, and rejection from God. If present guilt be so intolerable to the conscience, and if corruptions be so strong, how awful must the state of the finally impenitent and the unalterably wicked be! But thus to think of losing the blessed enjoyment of God,—being as an outcast from his presence; the everlasting companion of the vilest creatures,—and the prey of deathless remorse and despair; this indeed is sufficient to excite the

most serious concern, to melt the soul in severest woe ! and yet this horrid weight of misery is often justly apprehended, because by finit is deserved ! This is the sorrow of sorrows ; the idea of it alarmed even Paul—vide 1 Cor. 9, 27. lest I should be reprobate !

4. The Mourners in Zion, are sincerely grieved on account of the *prevailing wickedness* of the world. The heart entendered by conviction, feels not only for the natural sorrows—the pain, want, sickness, and misery of mankind ; but is much more deeply affected because of general error, licentiousness, and iniquity. Looking around us we perceive disorder and unhappiness. Marks of original apostacy appear in all ; and the gay and the grave, without Christ, seem equally the prey of corrupt lusts, the vassals of Satan, and the heirs of condemnation. Thinking on the present enmity of man against God ; the various forms of sin ; and the tremendous wretchedness to which it leads : this wrings the benevolent spirit with unutterable sorrow. Thus the Psalmist “ beheld the transgressors and was grieved, because they kept not God’s law ;” and thus Jesus himself beheld the iniquitous Jerusalem, and wept over it. And the same lamentation every mourner

may justly take up, over the thoughtless, unbelieving, and impenitent sinner: "*Oh that thou hadst known, at least thou, in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace.*"—Vide *Luke 25, 41.*

5. Such as are called to conflict with *peculiar trials* and afflictions, of body, mind, or estate, may truly mourn. Our frail tabernacles are liable to a variety of diseases; some acutely painful; many tediously exhausting; and all indicating original transgression, and leading to certain mortality and dissolution. Now, though divine grace elevate the soul to the hope of a blessed resurrection, yet still "in this body we groan, being burdened;" and the spirit often labours not only with bodily distress, but with temporal afflictions, and social bereavements: as well as sympathetic grief for the pains and troubles of others.

"To mourn and to sorrow is mine,
 "While bound in this prison I breathe;
 "And still for deliverance pine,
 "And look for the issues of death."

II. BUT now let us contemplate the reviving contrast,—the blessedness which Christ reveals and imparts to all his spiritual

mourners. Now it is our unspeakable mercy, that while “the sorrow of the world worketh death, godly sorrow (i. e. sorrow concerning God) worketh life and peace.” While, therefore, we are desirous of enjoying true consolation, let it be deeply impressed upon our hearts, that as sin and the world are the true causes of pain and grief; and that we are totally insufficient of ourselves to procure solid ground of happiness or joy: it is from God alone, through Christ, that we must seek and receive these invaluable blessings. “And blessed for ever be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Mercies, and God of all Comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulations.” Here, as to the source of real comfort, I may recommend the boundless pity of the Father, the amazing condescension of the Son, and the rich grace of the Spirit, who is justly styled the Comforter, and who is promised to all the afflicted disciples of Jesus. But we must now particularly consider the nature of their comfort.

1. Believing Mourners are comforted with the revelation of *pardoning mercy* in Jesus Christ. As the saddest state of the

soul is that of guilt and fear, so the surest and sweetest consolation is that which is derived from a knowledge of salvation. "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world." *John* i. 29.—In this view Christ is emphatically the comfort of his people. He engaged in their behalf. He turned aside the threatened shafts of vengeance, and "bore our sins in his own body on the tree." He hath made an end of sin, and brought in an everlasting righteousness; and he hath not only made a way for our restoration to the favour and enjoyment of God, but he actually invites and encourages every convinced repentant sinner: "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. I am the good shepherd, that giveth his life for the sheep. Be of good cheer, your sins are forgiven you; and in me ye shall have peace."—See *Matthew*, xi. 28.

2. True mourners are and shall be comforted by the *special influence* of the holy spirit, as well as by the gracious friendship and communion of God. So our Blessed Lord declares, "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come unto you; and I will send you another spirit, who shall abide

with you for ever." It is the blessed provision of the gospel that we have not only an atonement made for guilt by the blood of Christ, but an effectual influence ensured to enlighten, and cheer, and sanctify our souls. And this divine energy the mourning Christian often feels inspiring trust and hope in the soul; applying with power the truths of Scripture; giving liberty and pleasure in the exercise of devotion; and drawing into delightful fellowship with God.

3. Spiritual mourners are seasonably comforted by the *means* and *ordinances* of grace. In *prayer* and praise they can approach unto God, as the fountain of mercy, and the giver of all good: and while they pour out their wants and wishes and sorrows before him, they find the peace which passeth all understanding imparted, to revive and keep their hearts and minds through Jesus Christ. Thus also in attending public *instruction*, they receive the word of Christ with gladness, and find it a lamp to illuminate their dark minds, and a cordial to revive their drooping spirits. So in *Baptism* and the *Supper* of our Lord, humble penitent believers perceive the great love wherewith he hath loved them: and

while following his commands they find present peace, often forget, or lose their burden, and bear away a blessing from the mercy-feat.

4. Afflicted Christians are especially comforted and animated with the exceeding great and precious *promises* of the *gospel*. These indeed are as streams of water in a barren land: they cheer and quicken the dejected soul. Here final peace and acceptance; strength and victory; deliverance from sin and sorrow; perfection of holiness; re-union with the beloved people of God; the resurrection of the body; and life everlasting:—all are insured through Jesus Christ.

5. But mourners shall be fully comforted, and our Lord's promise ultimately accomplished, when time shall be exchanged for *eternity*! Death, though the king of terrors to the impenitent guilty, is the gate of bliss to every believer; and through this, with Divine support, the ransomed soul enters into the full joy of the Lord. Then the conflict ceases: then temptations vex no more: then the race is run, the battle fought, the prize obtained, and the days of mourning ended. Released from the prison of mortality, and admitted to the pure regions of

light and love, who can think, who describe, the freedom, joy, and confidence of the immortal spirit! And when this mortal shall put on immortality; when the body sown in corruption shall be raised in glory; united to its proper conscious spirit, and transformed into the likeness of Christ's glorified body, then indeed the delight shall be complete—God shall wipe away all tears from all eyes, and communicate the fruition of himself for ever.—See *Isaiah*, xxxv. 10.

As the Improvement of this subject, let us remember these few plain truths:—Sin is the cause of the bitterest sorrow, and leads the unbelieving and impenitent to endless woe; to utter darkness and despair—

“ A shut up heav'n, the sharpest rod !

“ A gnawing hell, an angry God !”

But Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the compassionate Saviour of Sinners, the friend of Souls; he discovers the pardoning love of his Father; he purchased by his blood true peace and happiness; and by his good Spirit he applies divine Consolation. “ Let us therefore look unto him, for Mercy to pardon, and grace to help, in every time of need :” and while we enjoy the favour, the word,

and the hope of the Gospel now; let us also look forward, and prepare for the fulness of Joy in the world above. In this state of sin and trial, we must suffer tribulation: but in Christ we have true peace; and in his presence above, life and glory for ever!— There shall mourners be divinely comforted. There shall they meet the redeemed partners of their faith and love, freed from every burden. They shall retrace the ways of Providence with mutual satisfaction, and acknowledge that the bitterness of sorrow was the most salutary remedy, to wean from sin, and fit their souls for heavenly joys. There shall they see “the Man of Sorrows” himself, exalted in honour and Majesty; and there celebrate the high praises of their God, without interruption or end!—AMEN!



HYMN.

FROM THEODOSIA. C. M.

GOD THE ONLY REFUGE OF THE AFFLICTED.


DEAR refuge of my weary soul,
On thee, when sorrows rise!
On thee, when waves of trouble roll,
My fainting hope relies.

To thee I tell each rising grief,
For thou alone canst heal;
Thy word can bring a sweet relief,
For every pang I feel.

But oh! when gloomy doubts prevail,
I fear to call thee mine;
The springs of comfort seem to fail,
And all my hopes decline.

Yet, gracious God! where shall I flee?
Thou art my only trust;
And still my soul would cleave to thee,
Tho' prostrate in the dust.

Hast thou not bid me seek thy face,
 And shall I seek in vain?
 And can the ear of sov'reign grace
 Be deaf when I complain?

No, still the ear of sov'reign grace
 Attends the Mourner's pray'r;
 Oh! may I ever find access,
 To breathe my sorrows there.

NOTES, &c.

How different is the estimate of God from that of man, concerning our present character and condition. — “ You admire the gay and jovial part
 “ of mankind, and please yourselves with the hope
 “ of joy and festivity: but I say unto you, Happy
 “ are the men of a more serious temper, and
 “ especially they that now mourn under a peni-
 “ tential sense of their sins; for they shall ere long
 “ be comforted with the discoveries of God's for-
 “ giving love, and be cheered with the reviving
 “ rays of his everlasting favour.”

Vide Doddridge Exp.

For promises to illustrate page 12, the reader is referred to *Isaiah* xli. 10—*Zech.* xiii. 1—1 *Tim.* i. 15—2 *Cor.* xii. 9—*John* x. 28—*Heb.* xiii. 5—*Rev.* ii. 10. and vii. 16 & 17.

END OF NUMBER III.



